

food, water, medical services, and sanitation facilities. Despite the numerous credible reports coming out of the region, the Ethiopian Government has denied that such violations may be occurring and has refused to even investigate these allegations and/or permit independent assessments of conditions in the region. Such stonewalling only further undermines the rule of law and the Government's obligation to protect its civilian population.

The aid organizations now struggling to keep these Ethiopian civilians alive, as well as national and international human rights defenders, democracy advocates, independent journalists, and humanitarian organizations seeking to consolidate and extend peace, democracy, and development in Ethiopia, are already facing cumbersome bureaucratic rules and sometime succumb to self-censorship to avoid Government reprisals. The Ethiopian Government's new law, if passed in its current format, would make it almost impossible for these groups and individuals to continue their important efforts. Under the Charities and Societies Proclamation, non-Ethiopian organizations would be prohibited from engaging in democracy, human rights, good governance, or conflict resolution activities, and national civil society groups would have to forgo foreign funding and submit to strict Government regulation.

To reaffirm and facilitate Ethiopia's commitment to and progress towards democratic development, eliminating extremism, good governance, combating HIV/AIDS, improving agricultural productivity, and reducing chronic hunger, the U.S. Government has provided billions of dollars worth of assistance in recent years with more than \$700 million already in fiscal year 2008. The majority of this support is delivered through U.S.-based nongovernmental organizations that offer essential services and supplies to civilians as well as valuable technical assistance and resources to strengthen Ethiopian institutions and infrastructure. The new restrictions and regulations would severely limit or even prohibit much of this assistance and should cause the United States as well as other international donors to reconsider whether contributions to Ethiopia can further democracy, development and accountability.

The Ethiopian Government claims the new regulations are aimed at improving the accountability and transparency of civil society organizations operating in Ethiopia. But what the provisions would actually do is erode the Government's own accountability and transparency by impeding these organizations' ability to serve their essential watchdog functions. This is not the time or place for tighter controls. Instead, the Ethiopian Government should support improvements in the quality and capacity of these groups, which are vital to the country's continued political, economic, and social development.

The United States needs to work with our partners—both on the continent and off it—and strongly oppose the imposition of this new proclamation to protect the gains Ethiopia has made in recent years and pave the way for further consolidation of growth and democracy. If passed in its current format, this bill would have a devastating impact on our foreign policy objectives and Ethiopia's development as a robust democracy. And, even if revised and amended, passage of this bill would still send a negative message, that of a government desperately seeking to hold on to power and dismantle any groups that might expose its failures or limitations. We must stand with the people of Ethiopia and with the principles that Americans hold dear.

WORLD REFUGEE DAY

Mr. FEINGOLD. Mr. President, today, on World Refugee Day, we recognize the millions of innocent people who are living as refugees due to violence, unrest, and natural disasters. Each day, refugees struggle to survive in an unstable environment where they are often unable to further their education, make a living for themselves, or obtain adequate health care.

The struggles refugees face are unimaginable. Being forced to flee your home, often to encounter precarious, crowded living conditions in a strange place, is particularly treacherous for women, given the pervasive problems of sexual abuse, beatings, and sometimes torture. Displaced people who make it to refugee camps have often already survived extremely difficult situations as they cling to the hope that they will one day be able to return to their homes.

Protracted conflicts and humanitarian crises increase instability and negatively impact the livelihoods of refugees we have seen this in countries such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sudan, eastern Chad, Jordan, and Syria. In each of these countries and in many other places around the world, national and international nongovernmental organizations confront challenging circumstances to meet the basic needs of refugees and protect their human rights. The international community and host governments must make it a priority to ensure support and access for these groups so that they can serve vulnerable refugee populations. Every time a refugee dies from an easily preventable disease or from living in unsanitary conditions, we are failing to live up to our collective responsibility.

But we cannot accept disaster response as the only option. We must be working harder to create systems that anticipate and prevent conflicts from arising so we can stop mass displacement before it even begins. We need to use all our resources to prevent such crises from occurring.

As we recognize World Refugee Day, we acknowledge the strength and sur-

vival of refugees, and we commit not just today, but every day, to work towards creating a world where governments fulfill their basic responsibility to protect their citizens.

BOY SCOUTS AT THE LITTLE SIOUX SCOUT RANCH

Mr. ENZI. Mr. President, I wish to honor the Boy Scouts who recently lost their lives at the Little Sioux Scout Ranch in Iowa. As the Midwest continues to experience devastating storms that have shocked us all, I would like to take time to remember four young boys from that area who were recently laid to rest. Josh Fennen, Sam Thomsen, Ben Petrzilka, and Aaron Eilerts were all Boy Scouts of America. These young men were remembered as boys who were loved by their families, on their way to becoming young men, and above all Scouts. As an Eagle Scout myself, I share a deep connection with these boys from Iowa and Nebraska, along with all Scouts throughout America. The path to becoming an Eagle is much like the path our future leaders should take, and although the lives of these four young boys were ended abruptly, they were on that path.

As I recall the Scout motto of "Be Prepared," I can't help but to think of the emergency drill these Scouts practiced the day before the tornado or how the Scouts moved swiftly to assist with their first-aid skills the 48 who were injured. The Scouting community has suffered a great loss. My thoughts and prayers go out to the families, friends, and Scouts whose lives were touched by these four boys.

TRIBUTE TO COLONEL GREGG P. OLSON

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today I pay tribute to Col. Gregg Olson, USMC, who will complete his 2 year tour of duty with the United States Marine Corps' Office of Legislative Affairs on June 24, 2008. I have had the pleasure to work with Colonel Olson on many occasions. In his role as the Director of the Marine Corps' Senate Liaison Office, he has provided superb support, acting as the principal conduit for information between the Marine Corps and many members of the Senate. His affable personality and attention to duty contributed to a highly successful relationship between the United States Senate and the United States Marine Corps. Though he will continue his service to the Marine Corps and the country, he will be sorely missed.

A native of Rhode Island, Colonel Olson attended the United States Naval Academy, and received a commission as a Second Lieutenant in the United States Marine Corps in 1985. His career as a Marine officer has been exemplary, serving with distinction in every post he has been assigned. Prior to his assignment to the United States Senate, he served two tours in Iraq,